

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-07 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13
TRSE-00 OMB-01 SSM-03 /075 W
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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2453

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 4097

E.O. 11652: ADS 1 AUG 1977

TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, JO, US, PLO, XF

SUBJECT: HUSSEIN NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW

1. ARNAUD DE BORCHGRAVE HAS GIVEN EMBASSY TEXT OF HUSSEIN INTERVIEW
OF JULY 21, 1977. TEXT IS AS PREPARED FOR CORRECTION AND APPROVAL
BY ROYAL PALACE IN AMMAN. EXPECTS PUBLICATION NEWSWEEK AND
PARIS HERTRIB SUNDAY JULY 24.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

BORCHGRAVE -- WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO THE BETIN PEACE PLAN--
A DEEP WITHDRAWAL IN SINAI, A MORE LIMITED ONE ON THE GOLAN
HEIGHTS, AND A SEMI-AUTONOMOUS WEST BANK LINKED TO JORDAN
BUT WITH ISRAEL RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY?

KING HUSSEIN -- THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN BE DIGNIFIED WITH
THE TERM PEACE PLAN. THESE ARE WELL KNOWN EXTREME ISRAELI
POSITIONS AND AN ALL, TOO TRANSPARENT DIPLOMATIC DEVICE TO
AVOID THE REAL ISSUE. IT IS PRECISELY THESE ISRAELI ATTITUDES
THAT ARE BLOCKING THE ROAD TO PEACE.

BORCHGRAVE -- COULD IT PROVIDE THE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS?

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KING HUSSEIN -- OF COURSE NOT.

BORCHGRAVE -- ON THE PROCEDURAL FRONT, BEGIN SUGGESTED THAT
A GENEVA CONFERENCE BE FOLLOWED BY THREE OR FOUR COMMISSIONS
ON THE KEY PROBLEMS OF SINAI WITH EGYPT, GOLAN WITH SYRIA,
THE WEST BANK WITH JORDAN AND POSSIBLY ONE ON LEBANON.
OR, ALTERNATIVELY, A RETURN TO CLOSE PROXIMITY TALKS WITH

THE USSS AS A GO BETWEEN. WHAT SEEMS REASONABLE?

KING HUSSEIN -- THESE ARE PROCEDURAL GIMMICKS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO CONCEAL THE REAL ISSUE -- THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 FOR THE COMPLETE EVACUATION OF ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. ONCE THAT HAS BEEN AGREED TO IN PRINCIPLE, ALONG WITH THE RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, PROCEDURE IS UNIMPORTANT.. WITHOUT THIS AGREEMENT, HOWEVER, THERE ISN'T MUCH POINT IN GOING TO GENEVA.

BORCHGRAVE -- WHAT ABOUT A JOINT JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN DELEGATION TO GENEVA TO GET AROUND THE ISRAELI REFUSAL TO DEAL WITH THE PLO?

KING HUSSEIN -- IT'S TOO PREMADE TO EVEN CONSIDER SUCH A POSSIBILITY. UP TO THE RABAT SUMMIT MEETING IN 1974, JORDAN STOOD READY TO SECURE THE RETURN OF THE WEST BANK, PLACE IT UNDER INTERNATIONAL AUSPICES PENDING SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE PEOPLE LIVING THERE UNDER TOTALLY FREE CONDITIONS. DURING THAT PERIOD, INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, THE ISRAELIS WERE AGAINST JORDAN PLAYING ANY ROLE. THEY SAID WE HAD ANNEXED THE WEST BANK AFTER THE 1948 WAR AND THAT IT WAS NONE OF OUR BUSINESS. THEN RABAT DECIDED TO HAND THE MANDATE TO THE PLO. EVEN SINCE THEN ISRAEL HAS DECIDED THAT ONLY JORDAN CAN BE INVOLVED. THIS PROVES THEY ARE NOT REALLY SERIOUS. THE NAME OF THEIR GAME IS CREEPING ANNEXATION, WITNESS THEIR GROWING SETTLEMENTS ON CONFIDENTIAL

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THE WEST BANK. I STILL FEEL BOUND BY THE RABAT DECISIONS WHICH MEANS THAT THE PLO MUST BE INVOLVED. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE KNOW IN ADVANCE WHERE WE WANT TO COME OUT AFTER A GENEVA CONFERENCE. THE REST IS TECHNICAL.

BORCHGRAVE--PRESIDENT CARTER SAYS THE US WILL BE AN HONEST INTERMEDIARY AND WON'T IMPOSE THE US WILL ON ANYONE. CAN THIS LEAD TO PEACE?

KING HUSSEIN -- WE VERY MUCH HOPE THAT PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE US WILL PLAY A MORE ACTIVE ROLE THAN WHAT WE HAVE WITNESSED IN THE PAST -- THE MINOR STEPS THAT DIDN'T BRING PEACE.

BORCHGRAVE -- WHAT IS THE CORE OF A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT?

HUSSEIN -- THE WEST BANK AND GAZA AND THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS. THE REST -- GOLAN AND SINAI -- IS STRICTLY PERIPHERAL.

BORCHGRAVE -- BEGIN SAYS A PALESTINIAN STATE ON THE WEST BANK WOULD BE A "MORTAL DANGER" TO ISRAEL AND THAT IT WOULD NEVER

COME INTO BEING. PRESIDENT CARTER AND GISCARD AND THE EIGHT
OTHER COMMON MARKET NATIONS ARE TALKING OF A PALESTINIAN
"HOMELAND" ON THE WEST BANK. ISNT THAT AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION?

HUSSEIN -- THATS A MATTER FOR PALESTINIANS LIVING ON THE WEST
BANK TO DECIDE FOR THEMSELVES FREE FROM FEAR AND PRESSURE. WE
HAVE RECEIVED SUGGESTIONS THAT WE SHOULD TALK TO THE PLO AND AGREE
ABOUT THE FUTURE. EVEN THIS HAS PROVED ENORMOUSLY DIFFICULT
BECAUSE WE CANNOT AGREE TO PREDETERMINE THE FUTURE. THE PEOPLE
OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA HAVE NOT BEEN HEARD FROM. THERE
SHOULD BE A PLEBISCITE ON A PLAN OR ON OPTIONS.
EVERYTHING IS IN DOUBT ON THE WEST BANK, INCLUDING PLO LEADERSHIP.

BORCHGRAVE -- COULDN'T BEGIN IDEA OF A SEMI AUTONOMOUS WEST BANK,
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WITH SECURITY LINKS TO ISRAEL AND ECONOMIC LINKS TO JORDAN,
BECOME THE SUBJECT OF NEGOTIATIONS?

HUSSEIN -- THAT FORMULATION IS A NON-STARTER. SUCH A
STATE WOULD BECOME AN ISRAELI ENCLAVE. WHAT THE PALESTINIANS
WANT IS A DIGNIFIED PEACE -- NOT CAMOUFLAGE FOR CONTINUED ISRAELI
OCCUPATION. AND IF THE ISRAELIS ARE CONCERNED WITH THEIR
SECURITY, SO ARE WE WITH OURS. IT HAS TO BE A TWO-WAY ARRANGE-
MENT, NOT ONE BASED ON ISRAELI SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS ALONE.

BORCHGRAVE -- PRESIDENT SADAT WANTS A JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN LINK
DETERMINED IN ADVANCE. GISCARD SAYS IT CANNOT BE IMPOSED
IN ADVANCE BECAUSE IT COULD THEN BE DENOUNCED A FEW MONTHS
LATER AND CAUSE A MAJOR CRISIS IN THE AREA.
HE SAYS IT MUST BE A VIABLE, AUTONOMOUS ENTITY RIGHT
FROM THE START WHICH COULD THEN DECIDE IF IT SO WISHES
TO HAVE SPECIAL LINKS WITH JORDAN.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 AMMAN 4097

HUSSEIN -- OUR FEELING IS THAT WEST AND EAST BANKS ARE ONE COUNTRY AND THAT WE CANNOT TURN BACK. THE RABAT SUMMIT DECISIONS DID TRY TO TURN THE CLOCK BACK BUT THE PEOPLE WERE NOT CONSULTED.

BORCHGRAVE -- HOW ABOUT THE SYRIAN IDEA OF A FEDERATION BETWEEN SYRIA, JORDAN AND THE WEST BANK SIMILAR TO THE UNION OF ARAB EMIRATES WITH A ROTATING PRESIDENCY, A JOINT FOREIGN AND DEFENSE POLICY AND INTERNAL AUTONOMY ON ALL OTHER MATTERS?

HUSSEIN -- IT STRIKES ME AS FAR FETCHED.

BORCHGRAVE -- BOTH CARTER AND GISCARD SAY IT IS NOW INCUMBENT ON ISRAEL TO RETURN TO THE 1967 BORDERS, WITH A FEW MINOR CHANGES IN ISRAEL'S FAVOR, WHILE IT HAS BECOME INCUMBENT ON THE ARABS TO GIVE ISRAEL REAL PEACE -- OPEN BORDERS, FREE TRADE AND NORMAL RELATIONS. DOES THIS STRIKE YOU AS A REASONABLE QUID PRO QUO?

HUSSEIN -- YES, THAT SUMS IT UP AND IT'S REASONABLE. BUT THERE ARE MORE IMPORTANT ISSUES THAN OPEN BORDERS AND NORMAL RELATIONS. WHAT, FOR EXAMPLE, WILL BE THE CONDITIONS ON THE GROUND FOLLOWING A COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND THE RESTORATION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS? WHAT PRECISELY WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL

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THE LINK BETWEEN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA? WHAT WILL BE THE SITUATION OF EAST JERUSALEM IN WHAT WE HOPE WILL BECOME THE CITY OF PEACE? WHAT ABOUT THE WATERS OF THE JORDAN, ONE OF THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTING CAUSES OF THE 1967 ERUPTION AND THE PROBLEM OF SOUTHERN LEBANON, A VERY HOT SPOT AT THIS STAGE WHERE WATER IS ALSO PLAYING A PART? ALL THESE QUESTIONS ARE MORE MEANINGFUL THAN OPEN BORDERS AND NORMAL RELATIONS. BUT I AGREE SOME ARABS ARE GOING TO HAVE TO BE MORE REALISTIC ON THE NATURE OF THE PEACE IF ISRAEL FULFILLS ITS OBLIGATION TO EVACUATE WHAT IT CONQUERED IN 1967.

BORCHGRAVE -- DO YOU FEEL THAT THE MAXIMUM MR CARTER HAS SUGGESTED IS STILL FAR REMOVED FROM THE MAXIMUM THE ARABS CAN CONCEDE?

HUSSEIN -- I BELIEVE THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS GIVEN MANY

PEOPLE IN THE ARAB WORLD GREAT HOPES. HE HAS GIVEN US CAUSE FOR ADMIRATION. HE HAS TOUCHED THE CORE OF THE PROBLEM.

BORCHGRAVE -- MOHAMED HEIKAL (THE ARAB WORLDS BEST KNOWN JOURNALIST) HAS WRITTEN A SERIES OF ARTICLES EXPLAINING HOW EACH NEW US PRESIDENT STARTS OFF WITH GOOD INTENTIONS BASED ON THE US NATIONAL INTEREST AS HE SEES IT -- AND THAT THE ISRAELI LOBBY, WORKING THROUGH CONGRESS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS, ALWAYS COMES INTO PLAY TO MAKE SURE THAT THE ENDING DIFFERS FROM THE BEGINNING. DO YOU SHARE THIS PERCEPTION?

HUSSEIN -- I HAVE COMPLETE CONFIDENCE IN MR CARTER. HE IS AN HONORABLE AND JUST MAN AND WILL NOT ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE DEFLECTED BY PRESSURES. HE IS DETERMINED TO STICK TO THE INTERESTS OF THE US AND THE REST OF THE WORLD IN THE CONFIDENTIAL

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MATTER OF PEACE IN THE MIDEAST. I AM VERY CONFIDENT THAT A MINORITY WILL NOT SUCCEED IN WRECKING THE CHANCES FOR PEACE.

BORCHGRAVE -- IN VIEW OF ISRAELS POSITIONS ON THE WEST BANK AND GOLAN PROBLEMS, DONT YOU FEEL THAT SINAI THREE MAY BE LOOMING ON THE HORIZON? ANOTHER SEPARATE DEAL WITH EGYPT?

HUSSEIN -- I AM CONVINCED AFTER MY RECENT TALKS WITH PRESIDENT SADAT THAT YET ANOTHER PARTIAL AGREEMENT IS NOT ON HIS MIND AND THAT HE WILL BE UNSWERVING IN HIS DETERMINATION TO BRING ABOUT TOTAL WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL THREE OCCUPIED AREAS.

BORCHGRAVE -- MANY POLICY --MAKERS IN THE WESTERN WORLD ARE WORRIED ABOUT A PLO-RUN WEST BANK STATE AS THEY SAY IT COULD BE A DANGEROUS DESTABILIZING FACTOR IN THE MIDEAST.

HUSSEIN -- ALL THE MORE REASON TO PUT YOUR TRUST IN THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, NOT ORGANIZATIONS.

BORCHGRAVE -- SAUDI ARABIA HAS RULED OUT THE USE OF THE OIL WEAPON AND ANOTHER EMBARGO BECAUSE IT IS NOW SATISFIED THAT THE WESTERN POWERS ARE BACKING THE ARAB STAND ON THE 1967 FRONTIERS AND A PALESTINIAN ENTITY ON THE WEST BANK. SO IF ISRAEL REFUSES TO RETURN THE WEST BANK, WONT WE SEE A NO WAR NO PEACE SITUATION CONTINUING FOR SEVERAL MORE YEARS?

HUSSEIN -- NO, I DONT THINK SO. ON THE CONTRARY, IF THAT HAPPENS YOU WILL SEE MANY ERUPTIONS IN THE AREA TRIGGERED BY EXTREMISTS ON BOTH SIDES. LOOK AT THE MAIN ISSUE IN THE LAST ISRAELI ELECTIONS. IT WAS NOT INTERNAL AS SOME ANALYSTS WROTE.

IT WAS PEACE OR TERRITORY. THEY KNOW THEY CANNOT HAVE BOTH
SO THEY CHOSE TERRITORY. AND THE LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE OF THAT
CHOICE IS WAR WHILE ISRAEL IS AT THE ZENITH OF ITS STRENGTH.
IT CANNOT AFFORD TO ANTAGONIZE THE US AND THE REST OF THE
WORLD MUCH LONGER AS IT DIGS IN ITS HEELS AND REFUSES TO
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RETURN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. SO THE TEMPTATION TO CHANGE
PERCEPTIONS MILITARILY WILL GROW IN THE MONTHS TO COME.
THIS IS THE REAL DANGER THE ARABS NOW FACE.

BORCHGRAVE -- AS AN AMATEUR GEOPOLITICIAN, I SEE EGYPT OUT OF THE
MILITARY EQUATION FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS AS IT CONVERTS FROM
SOVIET TO WESTERN EQUIPMENT, SYRIA PREOCCUPIED WITH LEBANON
FOR ANOTHER YEAR OR TWO, AND JORDAN OT STRONG ENOUGH
TO ACT ON ITS OWN. AM I CORRECT IN ASSUMING THAT THE
CONFRONTATION STATES WILL LACK MILITARY CREDIBILITY VIS A VIS
ISRAEL FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

HUSSEIN -- IT IS PRECISELY THIS PICTURE THAT COULD PROVIDE
THE ISRAELIS WITH THE CASUS BELLI THAT THEY WILL NEED TO JUSTIFY
WHATEVER MILITARY ACTION IS TAKEN. OUT OF UTTER FRUSTRATED
ANGER, ARABS COULD REACT IN A MANNER THAT ISRAEL WOULD DECIDE
IS TOO PROCOVATIVE.

BORCHGRAVE -- HOW LONG DO YOU THINK THE SYRIAN ARMY WILL HAVE
TO REMAIN IN LEBANON?

HUSSEIN -- I'M AFRAID ITS GOING TO TAKE A LONG TIME.
MEANWHILE, SYRIA-ISRAELI FRONT IS DENUDED,
WHICH, OF COURSE, SUITS ISRAEL. SO THERE ARE MANY STIRRING THE
LEBANESE POT -- INCLUDING ISRAEL -- TO KEEP SYRIA BOGGED
DOWN. DESPITE REPORTS THAT THE SITUATION
HAS BEEN DEFUSED IN THE SOUTH, ITS STILL A POWDER KEG.
IT BEARS A CLOSE WATCH.
END TEXT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES, PEACE PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 22-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977AMMAN04097
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: AS 19770801
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770261-0158
Format: TEL
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770731/aaaabael.tel
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1783935
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HUSSEIN NEWSWEEK INTERVIEW
TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, SOPN, JO, XF, US, IS, PLO, NEWSWEEK, (HUSSEIN I), (DE BORCHGRAVE, ARNAUD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e9c4ea65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009